

Registration/Sign Up

Supervising Adult: _____

☐ School Staff ☐ Parent

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

School District: _____

Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing:

I understand that once I formally register for this program I am committing to supervise participation. I will ensure that students/children participating in the program will complete at least six activities and return them to the Distant Pals Program. I will commit to monitor appropriate relationship between children. I am aware that any individual child that abuses this program may lose their Distant Pal privileges. I am aware that it is my responsibility to ensure that each participant understands the rules of participation before they commit to Distant Pals.

**** Registration is not official until the first Letter Activity and all other introductory forms are received.**

Signature

Date

Mail to: Stefanie Kessen
364 Grand Ave
Wausau, WI 54403

Did You Know?

Research shows that students with a range of hearing loss educated in public schools experience an absence of close friendships (Anita, Kreimeyer & Eldredge, 1994; Stinson, Whitmore, & Kluwin, 1996; Tvingstedt, 1993).

Deaf adolescents consistently feel more emotionally secure and more accepted in relationships with deaf peers than with hearing peers (Foster, 1989a; Stinson & Whitmore, 1991).

It is estimated that more than 50% of deaf and hard of hearing students in Wisconsin have no deaf or hard of hearing peers in their school environment.

A strong self identity leads to self-acceptance, the ability to cope, positive self esteem, feeling competent, self-advocacy and greater academic achievement.

The Distant Pals Program promotes self acceptance, self esteem, and close friendships with other students who are deaf and hard of hearing throughout Wisconsin. Since its start in 2006, over 250 different deaf and hard of hearing students throughout Wisconsin have participated in the Distant Pals Program. Students have written more than 2,000 letters to other deaf and hard of hearing kids through the Distant Pals Program.

Help build self identity and self esteem by registering your child/student for the Distant Pals Program.

Distant Pals Program



Linking students who are
deaf and hard of hearing
through the state of
Wisconsin



**WESP-DHH
Outreach**

For more information, Contact

Stefanie Kessen

Phone: 715-848-0159

Fax: 715-261-7757

stefanie.kessen@wesp-dhh.wi.gov

How does the Distant Pals Program work?

Participants are asked to correspond with their Pal through a letter or “letter activity” at least 6 times during the school year. Activities can be writing a traditional letter but may also include creating a puzzle, making a power point, writing a story, or any other creative ideas.

When the activity is completed, it will be mailed to the Distant Pals coordinator who will forward it on. Children who consistently participate in Distant Pals will receive special prizes. Individual children and/or schools can participate in this program.

What kind of commitment is required?

Distant Pals requires the completion of at least six letters or “letter activities” per school year. These activities may require additional help from the child’s parent or teacher. Once a letter is received, each participant will have 2 weeks to respond to their pal. This program is free of charge.

What are the goals of the Distant Pals Program?

The Distant Pals Program connects children who are deaf and hard of hearing throughout the state of Wisconsin and provides them with peer relationships and healthy role models. The Distant Pals Program goals are:

- To encourage safe, healthy and positive relationships between children who are deaf and hard of hearing
- To support literacy skills through letter writing and organized activities
- To cultivate peer to peer relationships and mentor/mentee relationships and encourage appropriate social skills through these interactions

How is a family’s privacy ensured?

Personal addresses WILL NOT be given out. All letters and activities will go through WESP-DHH Outreach. This allows personal information about each child and family to remain private.

Rules for Participation

I will be a good role model.

- ★ I will use positive language.
- ★ I will talk about positive things.

I will be a good friend.

- ★ I will send my letters/projects by the due date.
- ★ I will always be respectful of myself and of my Distant Pal.

I will keep my address confidential.

- ★ I will not give out my personal information.
- ★ I will not ask for my Distant Pal’s personal information.



WESP-DHH is a program of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy.